

Name of person Interviewed: Moe Bowstern [MB] and Johanna Reichhold [JR]

Facts about this person:

Age (if known) MB – born 1967; JR - ;

Sex Female

Occupation MB – Deckhand/fisher poet/writer/musician; JR -  
Deckhand/fisher poet/writer/musician

If a fisherman (if retired, list the ports used when fishing),

Home port, MB – Kodiak, Alaska; JR – Cordova, Alaska;

and Hail Port (port fished from, which can be the same) MB –  
Kodiak, Alaska; JR – Cordova, Alaska;

Residence (Town where lives) MB – Portland, Oregon; JR - ;

Ethnic background (if known) MB -; JR - European American;

Interviewer: Janice Gadaire Fleuriel [JGF]

Transcriber: Janice Gadaire Fleuriel

Place interview took place: New Bedford Harbormaster House

Date and time of interview: Sept. 21, 2007

## INDEX / KEYWORDS

KEYWORDS: Women; Fishing; Alaska; Kodiak; Cordova; Copper River Flats; Prince William Sound; Fisher Poets; Salmon; Halibut; Herring; Cod; Crab; Tendering; Seining; Gill netting; Longlining; Beach seining; Cod jigging;

[Start of File WAV\_0018\_001]

[00:00] MB getting involved in industry: born 1967 Onandaga New York, grew up Canandaigua, father was at teacher; Fathers' former student lived with them and then became a fisherman in Alaska, called to see about hiring one of the girls; Older sister went, then MB took over her place on a tender for the summer her first year in college; MB explaining what tenders and set netters do; Her tender experience different from her sister's, because the boat's cannery had folded and it was now low boat at a different cannery; MB decided to come back fishing after hearing whole summer how she could never make it

[05:10] MB living in Chicago after college, decided to go fish in Alaska; Kodiak fisheries MB fished—salmon, halibut, herring, cod, crab; MB also done gill netting on Hudson River, shrimping in Miami; MB now fishes about 1 month a year, jobs her partner can be on too; MB would like to try New England lobstering, some other fisheries; MB's favorite fishing is cod jigging, less competitive, follow the birds around;

[08:04] MB also did beach seining, oldest form of fishing on Kodiak, pretty much extinct now because of refrigeration issue; MB explaining beach seining; MB discussing issues of bycatch, how to avoid catching birds in nets;

[11:54] JR born Illinois; JR telling about moving to Cordova, Alaska when 23, taking up fishing for the money; JR thought fishing horrible at first/hardest thing ever did; JR kept fishing for the money, ended up liking it, got nostalgic for it during winter off-season; JR mostly done seining, gill netting, tendering, mostly on Copper River flats and Prince William Sound;

[15:25] JR now trying some other things during summer months, taught music to kids in small Arctic native villages, wanted to see other parts of the state; Seasonal aspects of Cordova fishing; JR's views on staying active during Cordova winter; MB's views on staying active during Kodiak winter; JR discussing first day sun shines on Cordova each year, loves ice skating in the winter, beautiful on the giant glacier outside of town;

[21:16] MB explaining how got known as a musician/artist, plays violin and wrote fishing "zines"; MB learned songs to sing when skiff operator to pass long hours; MB has gone to Fisher Poets every year since it started in '97, except second year;

[27:25] MB excited to be in New Bedford around other people in the industry; MB's experience at a festival that's wasn't all fishing people singing a song about a boat going down and audience responding differently than fishing audience does; JGF explaining settlement house work to MB/JR, based on previous interview with Ann Jardin-Maynard;

[30:26] JR explaining how went from singing/writing in church/her family, etc., to performing now; Fishing gave JR time to write brief things here and there, she would sing while driving boats, engine too loud for others to hear; JR started going to Fisher Poets 3-4 years ago;

- [34:32] MB's views on women in the industry, what festival visitors should know, women mainly in support/"expediter" roles in Kodiak, no woman who wants to try deckhand work should listen to anyone who says they couldn't do it; MB got lots of support from women in Kodiak when she worked/lived on boats;
- [38:25] MB having to prove self on boat, mainly to younger/newer fishermen who don't want to listen to her; MB's friend's similar experience, from a fishing family but had to make male deckhands feel like they'd thought of things themselves; MB discussing stereotype about women being smaller/seen as unable to do the work, always was first one up, etc., to prove up to the job, has seen men who couldn't take the lack of sleep, etc.;
- [40:58] JR's experience of someone she knew well on land, very gentle and calm guy, who turned into meanest guy she ever knew on the boat; MB's story of a captain who couldn't stand anyone to eat crunchy food on boat, each captain has their quirks; JR knows captains she's fish with, most she won't; MB no favorite captains now, the only one sold his boat; JR/MB discussing "psychological counseling" role women deckhands often find selves playing for skippers; JR's favorite captain was her first, a woman who taught her a lot and gave good advice, tries to help the few women in Cordova's fleet; Cordova's fleet is 500;
- [46:21] MB/JR discussing how most women on boats are in it through blood or marriage connections, women who walked the docks like they did were described in one article JR saw as "almost mythical beings;" MB discussing amounts she made over first few years, not always much; JR never made the \$24,000 MB made one year, Kodiak has better, more varied fisheries than Cordova; MB discussing how some women on boats relate to the guys, won't have anything to do with other women who fish; MB not in it for life;
- [49:45] MB emphasizing that women always have been involved in fishing, try it if want to, don't let someone tell you it's too hard, don't take stuff personally; MB/JR don't have TVs, never seen *Deadliest Catch*, think the hype of it is silly; MB doesn't do Dutch Harbor trips because how people get treated on those boats is not very nice, lots of screaming; JR's views on "screamer" captains, only able to hire green crews, jeopardizes safety because no one knows much about boats; MB found herself in the "jerk" pattern from boats when went to work on set nets, had to realize didn't need to be, not the same sense of urgency as on boats; MB discussing "indentured servant" kind of culture on boats, with deckhands trying to have things done before captain asks;
- [55:25] MB experiences "reentry" period after fishing ends, people need to be gentle with people after they first come back in;

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## TRANSCRIPT

[Start of File WAV\_0018\_001]

[00:00]

JGF: This is Janice Fleuriel. It is September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007 at the Harbormaster's House in New Bedford. And I'm interviewing Moe Bowstern and Johanna Reichhold for the Working Waterfront Festival. And I have listed that you are both deckhands and fisher poets. Is that pretty much...? OK. I'm sure you have other identities too, but [laughs]. But those are sort of what we're looking at.

So, I'll just go from left to right. Moe, if you could start by telling us about where and when you were born and how you got into the fishing industry?

MB: I was born in 1967, in Onandaga, New York. And, grew up in Canandaigua, New York. And my, father was for many years a social studies teacher. But his first year teaching, was at Bishop Ludden High School in Syracuse, and he ended up with a class of young people and one of them was a guy named Kevin O'Leary, went on to Penn State. And lived with us for a few months after he and his wife got married. And, wandered, as the times were in the seventies, went wandering. And then Kevin O'Leary ended up in Alaska. Ended up in a king crab fishery, bought a boat, got into halibut fishing and black cod. And then when my oldest sister was sixteen, he called my father and said, "Listen, my cook just ran off. Is one of your girls old enough to come work for me yet?"

And that's how my family got involved in going up to Kodiak, Alaska. And participating in salmon and other fisheries. And my older sister worked eleven years in the salmon industry. Well, four years tendering. And then, I think a season and a half on a black cod longliner. And she was also fishing halibut the whole time. Whenever there was a derby. And then, when she switched from the tender to the black cod boat, she called me and said, "I don't want this job anymore. You should take it."

So I... You know, it was my first year out of college. I was eighteen, and I went up. And, worked on a tender. So we were out forty-five days. We came to town three times for less than nine hours each time. I was *very* miserable. I worked with, a bunch of—we had a skipper and two other guys who both, put me down the *whole* time. It was awful. And they both spent the entire summer telling me how I would never—

We were *tendering*. We weren't fishing, but we were in the industry. We were picking up fish from set netters. So we were contracted—it's a boat contracted by the cannery for a certain number of days. And what we would do is leave the cannery. And, go around every morning. Pull the anchor at five a.m., and run a route where we'd pick up set netters in Uganik and Uyak Bay. And they're about a half an hour apart. And it took about a half an hour to do each site.

And set netters are people they get—per permit you get a hundred and fifty fathoms of net. You can split it up into two nets. They pick the nets three to four times a day.

So, we would pick up from them at kind of a regular time every day. So, we kept a record of their fish. We kept their fish cold. We would sell them groceries. We would sell them gas. We would give them their mail. And we would give them the

weather reports. Because you know, they didn't—Back then, they didn't have set phones, they didn't have tele—we were their communication and their link. Most of them had VHF radios so they could talk to us but you couldn't really talk to anybody outside the bay.

And, then every, you know three or four days we would unload onto a bigger boat. That boat would send it into town. We got done picking up the set netters at around five o'clock. And then the *seiners* would pull up and we'd take the seiners until about one in the morning.

So I was making about five bucks an hour. Because I was getting a hundred bucks a day.

Now, this was in 1986. People were still getting—I mean I think they get a hundred twenty-five bucks a day as a deckhand on a tender. So you can see that there's been adjustment for inflation in all these years.

JGF: It's a hundred [?] right now?

MB: It's a hundred...

JGF: And they take out your food?

MB: Oh, yeah. They take out your food and fuel. But I was eighteen, and, whatever. So when I was—I was so [laughs]. I really had never been in an environment where somebody told me I was a stupid idiot every single day of my life. And I was the cook. And I had no idea how to cook.

JGF: [laughs]

MB: And my sister had said, "Oh, yeah. It's really easy. You wake up at like noon. You make a little food. And then you make dinner. And then the seiners come at five and you work 'til one. And then every three days you go to town." That was her schedule for the whole time she was doing it. But I got this, kind of luck, where, this cannery folded right before. You know, right before the season started. So the owner of the boat had to scramble, get onto another cannery. So he got bumped to the bottom of the list, which is being a set net tender. It's a lot more work. So you actually make a lot less money because you're working your butt off the whole time. And you're...

And, so, it was... So after everybody told me the whole time how I would never make it as a fisherman, I'd *never* be able to fish, I'd *never ever* make it, I got—When I was getting on the plane, I looked around and I said, "I am coming back here and I'm going *fishing* some day."

JGF: Mmmmm.

[05:10]

MB: And so, I finished college. And I had a job waiting tables in a restaurant. I was living in Chicago. And, one night I was just like, "What am I doing?" I was working in a fish restaurant. And I just said, "I'm going to go to Alaska." First I said, "I'm going to cut off all my hair." And then I said, "And I'm going fishing." And I went fishing that summer. And then I fished nine salmon seasons. And I fished halibut for like the first four. I fished two halibut openings a season for, the first four years. In 1995 I started herring fishing. I fished herring, so I ended up fishing six months. And then, ninety-eight I also fished cod. And I did a couple seasons as a deckhand on a crab boat. Fishing Tanner crabs right around Kodiak

Island. And I just—You know a week ago, six days ago I was in Kodiak. And I was just finishing up a salmon season, helping a friend close down a set net site.

JGF: Wow.

MB: So, I've also spent a month fishing shad on the Hudson River. With a gill net. And I did a little shrimping in Miami.

JGF: Wow.

MB: For bait.

JGF: Wow. OK. Where do you live now?

MB: Portland, Oregon.

JGF: OK. And you're still fishing these days?

MB: Yeah I just got done.

JGF: OK.

MB: I mean, I ended up along the way I got a nice *partner*, we've been together eight years. You know, I own a *house* with a bunch of people. And so, I don't like to leave my partner. So if—you know, when we get a fishing job I make sure there's room for him. So, I end up maybe a month a year, working. And it's pretty much in Alaska. You know, now everybody—they know I'm a reliable hand.

JGF: Right.

MB: Although I'm interested in doing some lobstering around here. Or, you know, just checking out the fisheries around the world. But, starting here in the United States. I mean I've done a little of the shad and the, Miami thing.

JGF: Huh. Do you have a favorite kind of fishing? Like of all those different species?

MB: Geez, you know, it all [laughs]. I really love jigging cod. It was super fun. There was just two people on the boat. It's—You're out there in the springtime. And it's such—it's a very slow, gentle spring. You know, it happens so slowly. And... It's very quiet. You know, it's, you don't—Salmon is a competitive industry. There's a lot of boats fishing. And everybody's trying to get... You know, you're always like hooked into "What's going on?" and happening. And in cod, you just, wander around and you look for the birds. And, where the birds are working there's probably cod. And you get your cod spots. And... It's really just you and fishing. And it's much, calmer. Which, actually as I get older I like, *just* fishing. But when I was younger I really loved going to town and meeting everybody and running around on the docks and stuff. It was super fun. Being a deckhand.

JGF: Interesting.

[08:04]

MB: I also did a little beach seining, which is the oldest form of fishing on Kodiak Island. But it's pretty much extinct. There's really nobody who beach seines anymore. It's mostly a refrigeration issue. But that's a kind of fishing where one—you know, your net is anchored on shore at all times. And then you pull it in by hand. For the last quarter of the net you're mandated—The fishery is regulated by, you know you're limited by how much you can physically do. Because you're just using your body to do all the work.

JGF: So you didn't get into the big, [?] issue.

MB: Right. Well, yeah. I mean, the permits are a lot cheaper. You know, it's... At the time it was probably thirty grand to get into beach seining. Where, it was probably seventy grand to get a salmon seining permit.

JGF: I'm going to ask you one more question. Then I'm going to get with you, Johanna. But I don't want to lose this one. You kept talking about cod fishing versus salmon versus... Whereas, down *here*, they tend to talk about scalloping and dragging. And when they drag they never know *what* they're going to get. And it sounds like up there, you really get specific species? Or do you get bycatch and then you have to toss it?

MB: Well, we pinpoint it—we try and pinpoint it. I mean, sometimes you get a ling cod, when we were jigging cod. But... Because in the males, in the springtime the males are guarding the nests so they'll strike at anything. And so we don't want to mess with the ling cod population. Also we would get, what we call black rock fish. [laughs] I don't know what it's actually called. But that was—They had a little bycatch deal where we could get paid for ten percent. Ten percent of our delivery could—I don't know how it worked but we could get—some bycatch was permitted and we could get paid for it.

But I've always worked for guys that if we were catching what we weren't looking for we moved. I mean, who—Nobody wants—Sometimes you'd be fishing salmon and you'd run it into pollock. And you just, moved. Because you don't want to, mess with pollock.

So, most of the fisheries I've worked for, you... I mean with a seine, it's very clean. The fish are almost all alive. So whatever you have that's not a salmon, unless it has an air bladder thing that you can't get back down, can go back over alive. And a lot of stuff you can even roll out. Like the big stuff if you catch a shark or something. You can roll that out *before* you get it on board. So then you don't have to, you know run away from it on deck.

JGF: [laughs]

MB: And then... But, you know, gill netting... Gill netting is probably the most bycatch I've seen. You know, in terms of... Although halibut longlining, you know you get other stuff on there. But mostly you can get it off alive.

JGF: Huh! OK. Interesting.

MB: You get birds gill netting.

JGF: Wow.

MB: That's a bummer.

JGF: Yeah.

MB: You know, the murre, and the murrelets, and the puffins.

JGF: Uh huh. Wow. Interesting.

MB: You try and—you know, you try and time your fishing. If you go pick the net, before the tide really runs really hard and flags the net out, then you avoid catching birds, because they're not... You get everything out of there and then maybe it... But people I work for, they eat birds. They eat them. They make a puffin stew. And they make, murrelet stew, so, they try... Yeah, we were trying really hard to eat everything we could. And, put things back. So, I hope that... Yeah, we have draggers in Alaska, too. I've never worked on one. I feel like they're pretty destructive. I feel like everything just dies in there.

JGF: Yeah. That's interesting, the different. Because no one down here talks about seining. Huh.

[11:54]

JGF: OK, Johanna. So can you fill me in a little bit on when you were born, where and how you got into fishing?

JR: I was born in [?] country, in Illinois. And, moved up when I was twenty-three to Alaska. Just gave away everything I had, because I wanted to go up so bad. And I really don't know... I've ended up fishing. I just ended up in Alaska, met up with a friend there. And they took me to, Cordova Alaska right away, because it was their favorite place, in Alaska. And I ended up there, pretty soon thereafter because I liked it so much. It was a nice small place that no roads went to. And I was able to just find a little space and be out in the wilderness a lot. And, moved out into a little squatters community outside of town, into a little shack. And, by the time I had run out of money—I was doing volunteer work for a native rights group—and by the time I ran out of money, somebody suggested, why didn't I go fishing? It was the end of the fishing season that I had moved there, like toward the middle of the summer. And by the end of summer some of the crew were leaving to go back to school or things, so. And I was broke, so, somebody called me in to replace their son, a woman that I had met. And, I went out fishing. And, within—I hated it. You know, at first. I just hated it. I fell off the boat once.

JGF/MB: [laugh]

JR: I just thought it was the hardest thing I'd ever done. It was *so* horrible. But really, I had no idea how good I had it. You know? I had, really started out with quite a nice captain. Who... You know, which I only found out later after I got some really, big screamers the next season.

But, I—by the end of that couple weeks, I guess it was two-and-a-half, three weeks that was my first time in the boat, and had some money in my pocket. And then, a winter in Alaska to look forward to. And, I lived—you know I lived out in the shack with no electricity and my partner not there, for that winter. And, just kept coming around to fishing, because there wasn't anything else to do, for work in the town. It's very small and there's only a couple thousand people.

But, also because I ended up liking it. You know, once you're off the boat, and it seemed so horrible, but then when you're off, it seems—you know, you tend to romanticize it a little bit. I think we all do that. It's like, when you're on the boat you'll never do it *again*. And you're not making enough *money* and you know, this and that. But, when it's over you're like, "Oh..." You know, you get nostalgic in the middle of winter. Because it's like, seasonal—Cordova has mostly a seasonal fishery, that's like, six months on then six months off.

JGF: Huh. And what kind of fishing?

JR: Seining and gill netting and tendering, are mostly what I've done Mostly on the Copper River flats and Prince William Sound. And I stuck to Cordova because I loved the town and I loved my community there, you know, for so long. And I could have gone other places to get work but I preferred it. It was really—It's really a special place, one of the most beautiful places.

JGF: So you're still living there?

JR: Yeah.

[15:25]

JGF: Interesting. And so you're still fishing these days, pretty much?

JR: Last time I fished was about a year ago. And I've taken time off for a variety of reasons, but. I needed a good break. So I'm trying something else. You know, for a summer, on land, again. Doing other things. I went up to the Arctic this summer and taught music to kids in small Arctic native villages.

JGF: Wow!

JR: And, songwriting and that sort of thing. So I just wanted to see other parts of the state. Because we'd always been, you know, all of us folks who were on boats, you'd only ever see Prince William Sound and Copper River flats in the summer. You know, the instant the weather got decent whatsoever, you're out working. And you know, you work 'til way past the weather is, you know, getting bad. And then, that whole next month and a half is usually like, putting away silver, salmon. Putting away berries. Trying to get deer, trying to get subsistence foods to live off in the winter. And then by the time that's done it's just like everything's socked in with snow and weather, that, you know, I would always like, go up to the Arctic Circle for the deep of winter. Go to the hot springs up there or something. Those are the only times I ever saw the other parts of Alaska. So it was fun, finally to check out new parts of Alaska, go fishing for white fish on the, you know, in the far Arctic. Up where, they don't even know about salmon very much.

JGF: Huh! Interesting.

This—I just have to ask either or both of you this. So how do you go—you mentioned the deep winters of Alaska. Does the lack of sunshine in the winter—is that something you had to adjust to at all, or...?

JR: Yeah. I eventually, it like—it's something you just kind of bang your head against and, you have to come to like it. I mean, or... It hurts a lot of people. Especially the first year. But, eventually you have time to, kind of do things you never would do, like... Especially in a town with no roads to it. There's not a movie to go to. Or you don't even have electricity. There's like, endless pot lucks. You, either get fit, outside, snowboarding or ice skating, or you, just kind of lose your mind. I mean... But you take up projects you never would. Like, you start your whittling your firewood down into spoons. Or, you know, start writing more songs. You learn—a lot of people learn music that way, having so much time.

MB: Kodiak's quite a bit further south than Cordova. So, I was up there... And I've never claimed to be, you know, an Alaskan. I've lived up there for part of every month in the year except in November. But, you know I went up there at the end of December. And I fished in January, and February, came home at the end of February, before. So I mean, a bit of a winter. And in Kodiak the sun comes out around 10:30, you know 9:30 or 10 in the morning, and it's gone again by about 3. And the sun is actually *out*, and shiny, like that's when it's light, from about eleven to two. And you just get outside, and...

JGF: Soak it up?

MB: You know, I was working—When I was working on the boat we would be out working in it. And you were hustling. And it's just a *great* time for visiting. And I've always wanted to go up there in the winter so I could get all the visiting in that I've never managed to get in, in the summertime. And... Because, as Johanna said, you know, you're just, working all the time. And... Yeah, I mean, I found the winters to be—We didn't have the dark. *I* found it to be fun. But also, I live in

- Portland which is pretty far north in the United States. It's pretty dark in the winter and I just *love* it. I can't wait 'til the rain starts and washes all the, what we call the "Portland Interns" away. So you can get your *knitting* done. And you can get your *writing* done. And you can do all the stuff that you want to do.
- JGF: Right. Interesting. Huh!
- MB: Yeah. It helps to play music. You know?
- JR: Yeah. Cordova doesn't even get light, direct sunshine, because it stays behind the mountains for a long period. There's three months out of the water where the sun never even goes above the mountains. All you get is this diffused light when it does get sun. So, people are, you know, pretty light-deprived. And there's this moment, right around Valentine's Day every year, where the sun finally shines on Main Street for the first *time*. And, you know, there's like, all these zombies kind of walk out of the buildings and, look up at the sky. It's pretty funny. We all kind of, gather on Main Street, we just like, worship the sun for a little while.
- MB: But it really does. It's like she's saying, it really changes... one of the guys I worked for rented three movies a night. He was just like... I never wanted to talk to him, he was just... You know, people just crawl into a hole. Instead of embracing it. It's like Johanna says, you either go out and you exercise. Exercise is a *big* part of, being OK up there.
- JR: Well, and I would go out... My favorite thing to do in the wintertime in Alaska is go ice skating. We have this *giant* glacier outside of town. You can ice skate for five miles straight around these giant ice bergs, like big caverns, and...
- MB: And they're *blue*!
- JR: ...and tunnels, and they're *bright* blue. And they're *huge*. And you can go up to the face of the glaciers and all around. You just, pack your lunch and some hot cocoa or whatever and, you can ice skate the whole day away. And it's just, tru—it's just awesome. Amazing...
- JGF: Wow. That's cool.
- JR: ...with all this, snow and the mountains around you.
- [21:16]
- JGF: Well, I would like to talk to you about the aspect of being women in the industry. However, before we maybe wrap up with that, it feels like we've gone into the sort of creative bent of things. Can you each talk a little bit about what you do as fisher poets? As I have you described here? Or are you musicians too?
- MB: Well... You know, I play the violin. I've played ever since I was a kid. But really, I would just—Because I was I was living on a boat, whenever people in people in Kodiak had a potluck I would bring the violin and just sit in a corner and play tunes. Because I didn't have a *meal* to bring. And, I've played a few weddings up there. I'm kind of way more of like, the community musician than I am somebody that—I wouldn't call myself somebody who like—you know, I don't get up on stage and play my violin.
- But I'm *known* in the community as a musician. And I sing all the time. I used to work—When I was working on the boats, seining, I was the skiff operator. You have four people on a boat—the skipper, two deckhands and the skiff operator, the skiff man. And, the skiff man—the skiff person—runs the—you're attached to one end of a very long net and the boat's attached to the other. And between the

boat and the skiff you manipulate the net to catch the fish. So the skiff is attached to the boat, through the net but you're never actually—you're rarely on the boat throughout the day. And, you spend twenty hours communicating through hand signals and radio. Like, speaking briefly through the radio. And, it's just you and the *motor*. So, I started singing along with the motor. To keep myself healthy [laughs].

JGF: Right [laughs]

MB: And, the first year of course I only knew about seven songs. And, so then I was just like, "Oh my God I have to learn some songs, so that I don't go crazy in the summer." And that's a funny way to go about, *song* collecting. But that's how it worked for me.

And, in 1997 I was working on a *strike*—You know I was helping organize different aspects of as stand down, when we were refusing to fish. Because we didn't like price the cannery was offering. And someone came up from *Alaska Fisherman's Journal* a guy named John Van Amerongen, and he was doing a story on it. And he ended up interviewing me as to like, what I was doing at the time. I guess, a year before that I had made my first zine, which is a little... I mean you guys know what zines are right? The self-published, photocopied deal, and...

JGF: It's not necessarily Internet?

MB: No no no, it's paper. And I did the whole thing. I drew—I put it all together, and I stapled them, and I folded them all and I Xeroxed them. And I carried them around.

So I put my first one out in ninety-six. And, it was a way—And that also is very connected to fishing. It's called *Xtra Tuf*, which is the name of the company that makes our fishing boots. And it's synonymous with our fishing boots. You know, you'd say like, "Where are my Xtra Tufs?" Or, "Do I need to wear my Xtra Tufs?" And so that turned into the name of the zine.

And I was working with a woman named Brenda Sue, and she's another violinist. And, we kind of were planning the zine the whole time. As a way of, having something to talk about besides how much we hated everybody else on the *boat*.

JGF: [laughs]

MB: And she was an illustrator. She was kind of a compulsive drawer. And every time she—she was just always drawing whatever was around her. And I was always just following her around pulling it out of the trash, and getting all these pieces and papers and stuff.

And that's the only year I've ever rented a house on Kodiak. Because I was working six months. And, I had a box in the house, that had art in it. And people had to either add to it or take from it when they came and went. And so I collected this whole bunch of fishing art, made by fishermen from that summer, and I put it all together into a zine. And I had a place where I could be both the artist that I was in the winter, because I was, just kind of a starving artist in Chicago, in the wintertime. Because I actually never made enough money [laughs] to live high on the hog or anything! And then in the summer I was a deckhand and *nobody* in Chicago could understand *why* I was going off to Alaska for the summer, to work on boats. And *no one* in Alaska... was like, "Why would you ever want to live in

*Chicago?*” And so here I had this thing where both of my worlds could be in one place. And, I’m just releasing the—well I have an audio zine here for the festival. And so, John Van Amerongen interviewed me. I gave him a copy of the zine. And he passed my zine and my info on to the people that were organizing the very first fisher poets, in 1997. And so that’s how I ended up doing *that*. And so I’ve done that every year except the second year. And, now I have this fisher poets identity.

JGF: OK.

MB: Which...

JGF: Is one part of you [laughs].

MB: Yeah! I mean, it’s just like, Johanna says. You know, if you’re working... You just always like—Well, I don’t know if you said it but you said it earlier today. You *sing*, you make art, it’s like where... I guess, you know part of it is I think because we’re deckhands, and we’re artists and we’re going to make art about whatever we *do*. And because we don’t, we don’t actually—I personally do not *want* to be a skipper. I don’t want my own boat. I don’t *want* to deal with any of that stuff. I do *not* want to go gray before I’m forty-five. You know what I mean?

JGF: Yeah.

MB: I just want to make art. And a boat job is a way for me to make money and have, so much material. And be working outside with *insane* people, who are very interesting.

JGF: [laughs]

MB: And like... And also you get to see amazing scenery. You get to interact with, like, *walruses*—you know, not walruses, but, *otters* and *seals* and *whales*, and... You get to eat great *food*. But only, like, protein. You don’t really get much for *greens*.

JGF: Right. [laughs]

MB: So... I don’t know if that answers your question.

JGF: Yeah!

MB: Thoroughly enough [laughs]

JGF: Your worlds all come together, that’s really...

[27:25]

MB: Well after the zine, I mean it really all opened up, you know. And then I had something that I could hand to people. And like, given the stuff, I don’t know if... Cordova is a very special place, but... Kodiak is much more of a... You know, it’s full of people of Norwegian descent in the fishing industry who are very—Change does not come easy for these people. And after—Fisher Poets is like ten years, and they’re starting to say like, “Well maybe I’ll go down.” But I can’t imagine those people just being like, “Well why would I want to go somewhere in the winter to hang around with a bunch of fishermen? I want to go to Mexico.” You know? I’m really excited about being *here* because, I’m excited to like, meet all the people who work in the industry on the east coast. And hopefully they’ll be in the audience, you know, because, it’s so much more fun than performing... I mean, it’s *easy* performing for people who, have never been on a boat. Because you just say like—I mean when I was at the Sea Music Festival, I sang this one song and it’s kind of about maybe if a guy goes down in a *boat*. And I got to the end and I

was like—I never know if I’m going to make it to the end of that song without *crying*. You know, because I lost a couple of guys two years ago. And, everybody in the room was like, “Really? Oh, my God! Tell us about it!”

JGF: Yeah.

MB: And in Astoria when we’re at Fisher Poets, and when you’re in Cordova or you’re in Kodiak, everybody knows what that feels like.

JGF: They didn’t have to...

MB: Yeah, they know. They just go, “Oh, yeah.”

I mean, the first boat I ever worked on, sank. It’s not there anymore. It’s gone.

JGF: Wow.

MB: And the third boat I ever worked on is going to be in the Kodiak Maritime Museum. As the last wooden-hulled...

JGF: Oh, wow.

MB: I mean, I fished on the last boat to have an open wooden hold, fish hold in the salmon industry. Which, is all very romantic. But we were actually cooking the humpys. It’s not very good for fish quality [laughs].

JGF: Interesting. Just a side note, the woman that I just interviewed works at a settlement house. She just happened to drop it that one of their boats went down.

MB: Yeah, yeah.

JGF: And of course I was all over that.

MB: Yeah.

JGF: Because I can’t imagine what it feels like.

MB: What’s a settlement house?

JGF: Where the shares get... They’re like almost like, payroll service for the boats. That’s how they do it here. The boat owners hire the settlement houses. And they handle their crew shares and their taxes.

MB: Oh!

JR: It would be nice when you have a captain like...

MB: Captain Bobby.

JGF: Well, she says and it’s great too, with all the regulations and the taxes, and the fact that the fishermen are all self-employed... I guess one of her pride and joys from her job has been helping some of these people manage their salaries so that they actually have, you know, don’t have to owe like thousands in taxes.

JR: Well, they don’t believe they owe them.

JGF: Right. Well that, too, but yeah. So they work with them on that mindset right up front.

JR: Yeah. Right.

[30:26]

JGF: So anyway. What about you and the poetry aspect?

JR: Well... I don’t know, I’ve been singing... I was raised in a Southern Baptist Church. And went, like three times a week. And my mom had me, you know, singing in the choir. And she dragged me to elders’ homes to sing for people all the time. So, the singing thing was just from the beginning. And the writing thing was from the beginning. I was like, as soon as I could read or write I was always like writing little stories down and handing them to people. And running around

and handing people, you know, that was like the gift I'd run around giving them. It was just like my little thing that I drew or my little thing that I had written.

JGF: Yeah.

JR: So I've always been doing that. And, eventually, let's see... I just always kind of sang to myself and, you know, sang as a way like when I was alone by myself. I wasn't very public with it. And then, when I moved to Alaska my partner was an [?] banjo player who was pretty open about like, trying to get me up on *stage*. You know, "You've got a good *voice*." And he was trying to get me to learn guitar. And because there aren't that many venues and people playing in Alaska, especially in Cordova, like as soon as I picked up a bass I was right on stage being paid. You know, I could only play G C and D, but I could keep the time and go behind a band. So I was up on stage at a bar being paid. And, I started doing gigs from churches to bars around the state with my partner. But we did a lot of, just like playing on the streets, in different parts of Alaska when it was warm enough.

JGF: [laughs]

JR: And, eventually we started kind of being wanderers. We'd do like a month a half every year, we'd go down, and kind of like, go along the west coast or different parts. And we'd busk in city streets. Like in San Francisco, Portland, Santa Cruz, Chicago. And, that got me a lot more open about performing for people. And oh, "People like my voice," you know, "I can do this."

JGF: Right.

JR: And I always kind of wrote in secret, all of the time, my whole life. And I... You know, I never went to, or had any, writing classes. But I ended up writing more on the boats, I guess. And writing—Fishing gave me time, like if I could find twenty minutes while I was in between things, I'd write something about fishing. It was good to just kind of condense my energy. And I'd always sing while I was driving on the boats. Just keep myself awake. You know, you'd drive for like twelve hours.

MB: Yeah!

JR: It's crazy. So sometimes you know... The people sleeping *behind* me had earphones or earplugs in. The twin diesel engines were so *loud*, that there's no way—that even though my captain's head was ten feet from me, I could sing like at the top of my lungs and he could not hear one thing.

JGF: [laughs] Yeah.

JR: So I could just like, you know sing louder than I'd ever really sung before, and just keep myself awake kind of dancing around the wheelhouse and singing and watching for ice bergs and stuff.

JGF: [laughs] Hm!

JR: And then I helped out a lot... Eventually—I guess it was like four years ago, three years ago, I don't know. I ended up going down to the Fisher Poets and, kind of like just taking the few things I had and the few songs I'd ever written of my own. And the few poems I had about fishing and about salmon, down there. And that was really fun for me in the middle of winter one time. And, I met Moe and I met everybody there. And, just started to take it a little more seriously. And *Fish*[?],

actually the first song, I wrote the tune on the train on the way there. I like hitched and trained my whole way to Astoria, Oregon.

JGF: Wow.

JR: Because I really wanted to see these other people who...

MB: From where?

JR: ...fished and wrote, you know from Alaska. Anyway.

JGF: Huh.

JR: So... And it was a great time.

[34:32]

JGF: Let me just ask you this. I could ask each of you about twelve more questions about any aspect of these. You're great to talk to. In case we run out of time, what would you want the average festival visitor—in order to get a little bit our theme of women in the industry—to understand about women in the fishing industry? Is there—I mean, I think sometimes you know, when any of us hear that, our first, "Oh wow!" you know. And "How unusual!" And, I'm not sure it's as unusual as we'd all like to think. But any thoughts you have about what they should know about women's roles in the fishing industry.

MB: You mean as deckhands you mean?

JGF: Well, that's sort of a good question. I was sort of trying to keep it pretty general. There's a little bit...yeah, I would say partly as deckhands. I'm going to say, is that a less traditional role? Or, I wonder if I'm just—if that stereotype doesn't hold up or not? Like there's more of them out there than we might think, or...

MB: I would have to say, speaking for Kodiak, that generally women are more in the support roles. Where they're expediting, either for their families, or they're professional expeditors for the canneries. And, you know, there's a woman that runs the marine supply store. She knows everything about the industry. She knows all the fishermen. There's... You know, the woman that taught me how to fish, as far as how to like live on a boat. She grew up fishing and she married a fisherman and she raised four daughters. And, she's an expeditor. Which is somebody who...you know, everybody that fishes for a cannery, all the set net sites, all the boats, plus the remote cannery, the locations, she gets everything they need. She gets all their *mail* sent out to them. And she gets all their groceries. They send in a grocery list, it's back out in two days on the tender. She gets whatever they need. And, messages, and boat parts and stuff like that. And, just, you know, being in a family with someone who's fishing, and being in a family that has a working boat, is a lot of work and it's a really—you know, there's a high divorce rate in fishing, I feel like. At least in Kodiak. You know, you really—you got somebody who's *gone* all the time. And even when they're *there* they're not really there, because, their first—Really you have to, you know like, their first deal is to their boat and to the ocean and, their livelihood and stuff. And it's very clear, to *me*, which is why I picked an artist to be my partner you know.

JGF: [laughs]

MB: But, as far—What I would tell to a woman who's wanting to know about deckhand stuff is that you can do the job. It's not so much about strength, in a lot of the fisheries, because, there's so much machinery that can do the stuff. But it's

about like, what you can take in terms of, just uncomfortable living conditions, you know, and... Not being around other women is *hard*. I mean you might not think so, even if... But like, gosh go a month without talk—you know, think about that, going a month without being in the physical company of another woman. And it's a way to—you know, it's a way that, when you're the only woman on the boat, it's tough. But there's a freedom that comes with it too. But, I would just say like, you can do it. And also, you know, support women who are in the industry. Support women who are on the boats. I mean the women of Kodiak reached out to me, and I probably got better taken care of than the boy deckhands. The canneries have showers for the boys, but. You know, the women of Kodiak were like, "You're living on a boat? Come home with me." I'd go home with them. I'd a shower, I'd get to drink wine with them all night. You know, I'd get my laundry done. I'd show up at the boat and you know, like... Those women, I still go to their houses. I still do my laundry. You know?

[38:25]

JGF: And on the deck would you feel like you had to prove yourself?

MB: You know you *do*. And it's really *hard*. Especially when you're—you know as the skiff operator frequently I was the person on the boat that had a lot of experience. And, skippers would constantly give me some, you know, twenty year old to be like, "OK, do everything she says." And they just, *don't*. And I never really learned how to handle them. Which is, a failing of mine. You know, I wish I... I always expected to work like a man, where you just go, "Do this," and they do it. But, you kind of—you can't. It's frustrating, you know. And I had to learn from my friend Selua[sp?] who was really good at figuring—Her dad's a fisherman. She married a fisherman. You know, her sister married a fisherman. You know, it's like their—she's Norwegian [laughs]. Their family's been in Alaska for four generations and her grandfather pioneered herring fishing in Kodiak. But she grew up being sixteen and knowing more than anyone else on the boat besides her dad and still having to like make these twenty-eight year old deckhands think that they thought of how to run the deck pump, or, figure out... You know what I mean?

JGF: [laughs] Yeah. And so it's really the younger guys coming in that have more issue with it than the...

MB: If a skipper hires you, he's for women on the boats! And a lot of the guys, I mean, you [speaking to JR] have that great thing that you were telling about, where you and Sierra wrote down... I mean, women are smaller. You know, they generally will not...

JGF: Well not [refers to JR who's tall] [laughs].

MB: Well a lot of women. Yeah [laughs].

JGF: You're probably taller than most of the men.

JR: Yeah.

MB: Yeah. But I mean... I remember my skipper thinking that I wouldn't be able to do anything. The first, salmon guy I had. And my sister, who was in the industry already, told me a couple pieces of advice. And one of them was, "Always be the first one up." And the other one was, "If you don't know what to do, cook or clean." And so I just always tried to do that and I was *always* the first one up.

And, the first, fishing opening we had, where we were getting four hours of sleep. After the second day, the guy that was the know-it-all rocket scientist—like literally had left some kind of NASA job, and was in the middle of a divorce and having an Alaskan adventure—he was a total *wreck*. He couldn't—he couldn't make it. And I was just bopping around on deck no problem. And you never know what kind of person you're going to be. And that doesn't have anything to do with being a woman or not. You never know. It's one of those deals where it's like, if you're in an accident are you going to be the person that completely loses their shit or are you going to be the person that, suddenly gets really calm and knows how to deal with everything.

[40:58]

JR: Right. There was this... The first time I ever went out seining with Bobby there was this, the guy that I was supposed to show what to do was this old hippie who spent his evenings making like porcupine quill...you know, these little beadwork and embroidery things. And, he taught me how to do willow baskets. He was this peaceful guy who meditated all the time. But when you got him on the boat, and when we got out there on the grounds in Valdez, and the period opened, and we were like, "Nets in the water!" the guy went completely ballistic!

MB: [laughs]

JR: He started hitting people over the head!

JGF: Really?

JR: Not me. [laughs] But he was just like, bleh! He turned into the meanest guy I have ever met! And he just started like whacking the youngest guy next to him over the head [laughs].

JGF/MB: [laugh]

JR: Like you have *no idea* what people are going to be like when they start fishing.

MB: You don't, no.

JGF: Huh!

MB: My people just started calling people—like, if he didn't like you he'd call you Bubba. And if he *really* didn't like you, he'd be like, *Ethel! Ethel!*

[laughter]

MB: And he had a rule that there was no crunching on the boat. You couldn't eat carrots. If you ate a carrot next to him, he'd go, "Whoooooos, *cruuuunching!?!?*"

[laughter]

JGF: Was that a superstition or just...

MB: No! He's, nuts!

JGF: Yeah. OK.

MB: He's nuts! *Love him* in town! *Great* guy!

JGF: Oh, my God. That's bizarre.

MB: Yeah.

JGF: I never heard that before.

MB: Really?

JR: That's like...

JGF: But maybe we never thought to ask it...

JR: Every captain has like a hundred things like that.

MB: Yeah!

JR: You just have to learn like, and just hope [laughs] that it's going to be OK.

JGF: Wow. So do you have like your favorite captains that you'd prefer to go out with, or...?

JR: Oh, yeah! Of course. I mean, at this point, there's—I mean, there's like ninety-five percent of the fleet that I'd be like, "No! No! No!"  
But, I love them. I just don't want to fish [laughs] with them.

[laughter]

MB: I don't have any favorite captains?

JGF: You don't? you're OK with all of them?

MB: No, they all have something wrong with them.

[laughter]

MB: Like the favorite guy—the guy I worked with most recently, had a baby and sold his boat. So... I don't know what he's doing. I would go out with him again. I really enjoyed fishing with him. I mean, he's up and down. You know? And you got to do the skipper babysitting. You know what I mean?

JGF: [laughs]

JR: Psychological counseling.

MB: Yeah, totally. And women are really used a lot for that. It's like you come in to town, and the guys are cut loose. And you got to hear about the skipper's problems. And, "Oh, I can't believe you're going to make me eat dinner all by myself." And, you know what I mean? Well, this was winter for me. And he was kind of a brother-in-law. So, I definitely felt like it was OK. But, you know. I mean he did it, to—he did it, he always hired women, and he always...  
But not everybody hi—I mean, like, there's a *handful* of boats in the fleet that hire women.

JGF: OK.

MB: And so it's just kind of like, you just...

JGF: Yeah.

JR: Well, who hire women. There are guys who hire women, but then, who are hiring women because you're a *woman*. Because you look like, you know you're a *woman*. And they want to have a woman on the boat for that reason. And you just kind of have to turn around and [?] that boat.

MB: Yeah! And then there's other guys that will, you know, feel like a *woman* is a deckhand.

JR: And I've had captains who are just like, "Women are better deckhands. That's why I hire them. I don't have to deal with the flack, but they're just plain old better deckhands." You know? Like at this point in the history of the fleet you have a bunch of guys who are getting jobs just, you know really too easily. But women, you know the quote from one of my captains, was like, "Women start out where men used to start." You know? They've got to prove themselves from the beginning and they've got to work hard as *shit*. They've got to work really hard to get any respect on a boat from the beginning. So there's no being lazy, there's no screwing around. From the beginning you've got to be on top of your stuff.  
And, I guess the favorite captain that I ever had was a woman who was the person that gave me my first gill-netting job. And, she was, you know—Tory Baker, who lives in Cordova, and I'd just go out with her out in the sound and on Copper

flats. But, she was great to start with. And I remember, like, a few months in she gave me this little talk one morning, we were like, you know, waiting for the fishery to open. She was like, “Don’t do this unless you want to do it for the rest of your life. And if you want to do it for the rest of your life, like, figure it out, now. Take it seriously. You need to like, take it seriously and figure it out. Learn how to mend nets. Learn how to deal with an engine.” You know, but she would give me a lot of good talks. Because there aren’t many girls in Cordova doing it. And she’s kind of, trying to help—there are only five or six of us young girl deckhands. That was kind of like a big spike in the number of girl deckhands during that period, right when I came in. There were five or six of us. We were kind of like—we were tight, we all had our salmon boat earnings, you know. And, now there aren’t very many. There are a couple new girls in the fleet. But that’s within the last eight years there’s a couple new girls in the fleet in Cordova. But, there is about, seven—out of the hundreds of Copper Flats fishermen—there are about, six to seven, I want to say maybe even just five, fulltime women gill netters.

JGF: And how big is the fleet?

JR: Five hundred.

JGF: Wow.

[46:21]

MB: You know, in Kodiak I remember we had a lot of lady skiff operators one year. We couldn’t believe it. There was *eleven* of us. *Two* of us, were not related by marriage or blood to anybody in the fleet. *Two* of us, walked the docks for our jobs.

JR: Yeah.

MB: The *rest* of them, were married in or, niece or you know like, their uncles or dads were... And, there was about three hundred boats in the fleet, that was in 1994, there was about three hundred boats in the fleet. There’s four people on every boat.

JGF: Hm. Wow.

JR: I remember one season when I was working on the boat. There were—seeing this, fishermen’s journal with a *girl* on the front. I was like, “What the...?” They were like, “Oh, women are really coming back in to the industry.” But then, the main quote, in *huge* letters, in the middle of the article, was the words, you know, “The woman who walked the docks, who arrived in Alaska without anyone’s help and who walked the docks to get her job and did not get in through family or marriage or a relationship is almost a mythical-like being.” You know?

JGF: Wow. Yeah.

JR: And I was like, “That’s me!”

MB: Certainly the woman who has any money in her bank account. Because, the last person I talked about, the last skipper I worked for, I made eight grand fishing tanner crabs with him. But he was my relative, basically. You know, he’s my sister’s man. And that’s how I got the job. And I’m like—I mean, the first few years I fished—I made three hundred bucks my second year. Because of all the expenses and breakdowns we had. You know?

JGF: Wow. Yeah.

MB: [laughs] That's four months! Four months. Love my skipper. Can't catch fish, he's a boatwright, now. Which is *great*. I mean, it's what he should be doing. Taught me a lot of good stuff. Taught me how to mend. Sweet guy. But, you know... Twenty-eight hundred bucks the first year, four months fishing. Three grand the second year. Five grand the third year. You know? Five grand the fourth year. People are like, "Yeah, you make so much money fishing!"

JR: [laughs]

MB: In 1995—I started fishing in 1990. In 1995 finally I fished six months and I made twenty-four thousand dollars. I made ten during herring, in two months, and I made five one day and I made five another day.

JGF: Wow!

MB: And then, salmon fishing, I made five thousand dollars like in the first two days that we fished. And then, over the rest of the year it got up to fourteen for the whole salmon season. So, the rest of the season was the rest of the eleven. I mean, that was my big year. That was my big year.

JR: And I've never ever done that. Kodiak has a lot better fisheries.

MB: It's varied. It's extremely varied. It's year-round fishing. But I like live for working on little boats. And you know, like, I don't see women on bigger boats. The draggers and the longliners. It's like they *are* there. There's a woman on the Coho[sp?]. Won't talk to me. You know, she's just like—sometimes there's a deal where women won't associate with other women. Because, they really identify with the *guys*, you know, and they don't want to...

JGF: Huh.

MB: You can't.... And then in other situations it's an instant bonding thing, you know? But, I'm not a *lifer*. You know I'm not, fishing eight months a year. And I've *never* wanted to do that. I've never *been* that. You know, the fact that I did three years of six months a year fishing is like—I can't even believe I did that.

[49:45]

JGF: Yeah. Wow.

Well, I'm talking to two mythical figures today.

[laughter]

MB: You are! Yeah, we walked the docks, you know. Slept in my sister's van. Took me three weeks to get a job in ninety-ninety...

JGF: Well I guess I'll just wrap it because I know you have people coming back for you and we're supposed to be taking our harbor tour and all that. But, is there anything I haven't asked that you would have liked to have on the record about your experiences, or your perspectives on the fishing?

MB: Women have always been involved in fishing. And, you know... Always. Always, always. And don't *buy* it that it's too hard for you. And if you want to go fishing get your butt up to Alaska because there's plenty of work. Especially in Kodiak. But don't—you know, show up in May. Don't show up in September.

JGF: [laughs]

MB: Show up in May.

JGF: OK.

MB: I guess that's what I would—

JGF: That's when they need people.

MB: That's when it's a good time to start looking for salmon jobs. And that's the easiest thing to break into. And they hire the most crew. So you can decide if you like working with insane people and not sleeping very much.

JGF: [laughs]

MB: And having your hands be in pain.

JGF: Alright.

MB: And if you like that, well then you can move on to cod and work eight months a year. And wear eye protection. That's like—you know, start wearing ear protection immediately.

JGF: Is that because of the captains, or... [laughs]?

MB: No, it's the engines.

JR: Yeah.

MB: And don't take the stuff personally. Have a sense of humor. And believe in yourself. Do not listen to what those people tell you. Because they *will*. You know, there's like this weird insecurity. You tell somebody that you're working on a boat and all of a sudden the man's like, "How can you be doing that? That's what men do." It's like they take it personally, like you're trying to take their job... I don't know what it is. It's wild. Oh, and always be nice to the dock crew. Very good. Anyway, that's... I don't know if anybody in New Bedford but... It's really nice to be in New Bedford. I don't know if these tapes are going to stay here or what.

JGF: Well, they probably... The originals probably will. But Laura's hoping to have a Web archive so that anybody from anywhere could... You know, if, you sign your release form that you're OK with having your things on that.

MB: Oh, *Deadliest Catch*?

JGF: Yeah.

MB: Never seen it!

JR: Yeah!

We've never... I don't have a TV. We don't have a TV. And, we just think it's silly. [laughs]

JGF: That anybody would care?

JR: No...

MB: Well just that it's so hyped up, you know? I mean, I worked crabbing with the same sized pots that those—I've done that kind of fishing. I mean I haven't done like the—I don't go out to Dutch. Because—not because I don't think I can do the work. I don't want to be *abused* by those assholes that work on the boats. You know, I don't feel like I need to be around a bunch of jerks. Like that. They're *not* very nice people.

JGF: Yup. Interesting.

MB: And also that kind of work—doing that work makes you inhuman. I mean they really... The way that they treat the crab deckhands. Like...you know, the way that they just scream at them through the loud [?], they don't talk to them. My first salmon skipper was a crab skipper. And a cod skipper. So he—And he was a crab crewman. And so he had no *idea* how to treat people. And he just—We went out fishing for three days as a test opener. They have a test opener, we

went out fishing for three days. When he came back he couldn't speak. Because he spent the entire time, *screaming* at us. And it's like, he intentionally hired green crew, which means people who didn't know what they were doing. You know, so that he would be—he didn't want anyone on the boat that knew more than him about salmon.

Does that seem like a logical way to do things? OK, so here's this situation. And then, he spent the entire time screaming at us because we did not know what to do. That's fishing!

JR: And they hire green—the screamers get green crew because no one else will work for them. So that this comes down to like, they're upping their danger quotient too because nobody knows how to catch their back. Because, they're a bunch of people that don't know boats very well. You know? So then they scream even *more* because they're going crazy, because nobody knows what the hell they're doing. Anyway. But yeah, that was my first captain, too. A guy that, you know, did winter fishing. Screamed a lot.

MB: And you know, I went and worked on the set net. After working all these years on boats, I went and worked on a set net site. Where you live in a cabin and you go, skiff out to the nets three times a day. And it's a *lot more* physical work than, working on the boats. Especially, more physical work than skippering or skiffing. I mean, the deckhands do a lot of—the salmon deckhands do a lot of work. But... And I had my partner with me. And *I* realized that I had these huge jerk tendencies from working on a boat where everything is just urgency, urgency, urgency. And watching him amble down to the fishing, beach. And I'm stuck behind him and I was just like, "Aaaaaaah!"

JGF: [laughs]

MB: "I can't get around you, you're in the paaaaath!" You know? And there was no, real need for that. But because I had just been, *barked* at, for so many years. I was trained as a deckhand like, what you do is you get there before the skipper even looks for you. You're already there. The boat's all ready to untie. You're like, "Where you been, Cap? We're ready to go." I just got that net mended. And it's this, *weird*, like servant thing, where you're just like, "You don't even need to tell me what to do because it's already *done*."

JGF: [laughs]

MB: "Let's go *make* some money!"

JGF: You're like the boat butler.

MB: Well, yeah, kind of. I mean, you're like an indentured servant. And that's another thing people don't understand. Like, you don't punch *out*. You know.

JR: Ever.

[55:25]

MB: And then, the other thing I think I want people to know is like, when you get done fishing... There's like this little period of reentry which I am in right now. Where you come back to civilization. And, just be gentle with people when they're like that. Be nice to them.

JGF: Oh...[laughs]. OK.

MB: Mm. [laughs] And eat wild salmon. Eat wild salmon! If it's that weird color, don't even go near it.

JR: That's farm salmon.

MB: Stay away from that farm stuff. You might as well spend your money on some other drugs.

JGF: [laughs] All right. I think that will have to be a quote in next year's brochure.  
[laughs]

MB: Good! Mm hm.

JGF: Thanks! Anything else, Johanna that you want ....

MB: [laughs]

JR: No [?].

JGF: OK, thank you very much.

[End of File WAV\_0018\_001/End of Interview]